

A JOHNSONIAN NEWS LETTER

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J. Homer Caskey writes wistfully of the days when the M.L.A. was smaller, and when little enthusiastic groups would gather in the room of F.B. Kaye for discussions that ran far into the night. "In those days," he adds, "I often spent the whole three days mainly in listening to talk about eighteenth century literature.... Now we go to a group meeting and have two hours of papers and discussion and then scatter for the year." A news letter, he concludes, "might do something to revive that old interest... might help prepare the way for much more fruitful discussions in large and small groups at the annual meetings." Your editor heartily echoes that hope!

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Claude Jones (UCLA) has now completed the manuscript for his edition of Isaac Reed's diaries, which will be published sometime during the coming year. Most of the original diaries are now in the Folger Shakespeare Library, but Jones found the missing portion in Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Since "Steady" Reed was a friend of Dr. Johnson and most of the other literary men of his day, his diaries are full of interesting passages. Reed did not make lengthy descriptions or comments on books and events, but the diaries contain abundant references to well known personages of Georgian London.

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The edition of Dr. Johnson's poems, edited by E.L. McAdam and D. Nichol Smith, is now in page proof at the Clarendon Press in Oxford. May Hitler's aim be as wide the mark as the Great Cham's definition of "pastern".

WIN A FREE SUBSCRIPTION!

One year's subscription to this news letter will be given to the person who submits the most amusing error of fact in the DNB account of any Eighteenth Century figure. The winning specimen will be printed in our next issue. It will then be sent with the non-winning entries for publication in the Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, where such corrections regularly appear.

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There is now available in this country at the Yale University Library, a complete set of the official photographs of all the portraits (over 4000) in the National Portrait Gallery, London. Regardless of whether the original paintings survive the war, biographers as well as historians of painting will rejoice that a complete set of the photographs is in America. The importance of the collection is indicated by the fact that the Frick Art Reference Library has less than a hundred and fifty of the photographs now at Yale. Some inquiries about the portraits have already been received at Yale, but the cataloging of the collection will not be finished for many months.

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Now that Jim Osborn's book on Dryden has been published he is deep in a biography of Dryden's biographer, Edmond Malone. To his other distractions (among them editing Work in Progress), he has added a dairy farm. We commend to his attention the Erratum notice from the 1798 edition of Pilkington's Dictionary of Painters: "Erratum, P. 807, line 21, for 'Jersey' read 'Guernsey'."

W.P.A. PROJECTS CONTINUE

Fortunately the work of the Historical Records Survey has not been interrupted by the war emergency. The manuscripts program has for its aim the preparation of three series of publications: Guide to Depositories of Manuscript Collections in the United States, Guide to Manuscript Collections, and lists or calendars of especially significant collections.

The Guide to Depositories, as compiled for each state, is a check list of all libraries and other institutions where manuscripts may be found. Guides in this series have been published for Florida, Iowa, Massachusetts (Vol. 1), Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire and Pennsylvania. Those for Illinois, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, New York City, North Carolina, Oregon, Tennessee and Washington are in process of reproduction at present and will probably be available this month. The indexes in these guides will show some English 18th century MSS.

The second series, Guide to Collections, will describe in detail the collections of manuscripts in the depositories described in the first series. The Guides to Manuscript Collections in Duke Univ. and in the Massachusetts Diocesan Library were issued some time ago; this year a Guide for the Oregon Historical Society has been distributed, and those for the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Southern Collection in the Univ. of North Carolina, and collections in the towns of Massachusetts are in process of being printed or mimeographed. Also in preparation is a Guide to the W. L. Clements library in Michigan.

Several further calendars and lists, devoted to American documents, have also been completed.

The inventories of church records will likewise bring to light a great deal of 18th century English material. This will be par-

ticularly true of the inventory of the records of the Episcopal Church in America of which the following have been published: Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, (Cathedral Volume), Michigan, (Dioceses of Michigan and Western Michigan), Mississippi, New Jersey, (Dioceses of New Jersey and Newark), New York State, (Diocese of Western New York), New York City (Diocese of Long Island: Brooklyn and Queens), Vermont, and West Virginia.

For further information, see Bibliography of Research Projects Reports which lists publications of the Survey up to Sept., 1940.

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Though the stream of 18th century manuscripts offered for sale has dried up considerably since the outbreak of the war, a few interesting items are seen from time to time. In Quaritch's latest catalogue (number 582, item 122) is a collection of documents and papers used in the proceedings against John Wilkes in the Courts and parliament, 1763-1769. They are of first importance to anyone working on Wilkes or on other subjects in this confusing period of British history.

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A SAMPLE PLEA FOR HELP

Your editor is convinced that Anna Seward's correspondence (six volumes, 1811) was not published from the genuine letters sent, but from later revisions, often much changed. He is thus anxious to locate any original letters from the Swan of Lichfield which may be in the United States.

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18th CENTURY REPARTEE

When "Athenian" Stuart once said, "Painting is my Wife, I think, and Architecture my Mistress", Frank Hayman replied, "What Pity 'tis then, Sir, that you have no living issue by either!"